

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A service retrieval apparatus which provides a retrieval service for retrieving a service provided by a server connected to a network in response to a request from a client and returning a result of the retrieval, comprising:

a retrieval unit that sets a retrieval condition according to the request from the client and performs a first retrieval over the network for a service based upon the set retrieval condition;

a retrieval result judgment unit that judges whether or not a result of the first retrieval satisfies judgment criteria set in advance; and

a retrieval result output unit that outputs the result which is judged to satisfy the judgment criteria;

wherein when it is judged that the result of the first retrieval does not satisfy the judgment criteria, the retrieval unit changes the retrieval condition and performs a second retrieval over the ~~network~~network; and

~~when it is judged that a number of one or more services included in the retrieval result has not reached a lower limit number set as the judgment criteria, the retrieval unit changes the retrieval condition so as to be wider and performs the second retrieval with respect to a new retrieval range excluding a range for which the first retrieval was performed.~~

2-3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously Presented) The service retrieval apparatus according to claim 1, wherein, when it is judged that a number of one or more services included in the result of the first retrieval exceeds an upper limit number set as the judgment criteria, the retrieval unit changes the retrieval condition to be narrower to perform the second retrieval.

5. (Previously Presented) The service retrieval apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the retrieval unit performs the second retrieval with respect to a new retrieval range excluding a range for which the first retrieval is performed.

6. (Previously Presented) The service retrieval apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the retrieval unit narrows down a range for which the first retrieval is performed for performing the second retrieval.

7. (Previously Presented) The service retrieval apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a reply unit that rearranges the result of the retrieval based upon values with respect to attribute items included in the retrieval condition, and then returns the result of the retrieval to said client.

8. (Currently Amended) A plurality of service retrieval apparatuses which provide a retrieval service for retrieving a service provided by a server connected to a network in response to a request from a client and returning a result of the retrieval, the system comprising:

a service information database that stores service information including address information and installation position information of the server and attribute information of a service provided by the server;

a service retrieval apparatus database that, when the network is divided into a plurality of sub-networks, stores address information and installation position information of a service retrieval apparatus with each sub-network included in a retrieval range;

a retrieval range setting unit that, by retrieving the service retrieval apparatus database based upon inputted retrieval conditions, specifies one or more service retrieval apparatuses conforming to the retrieval conditions and sets sub-networks, which correspond to the specified service retrieval apparatuses, as a retrieval range for the request;

a retrieval unit that executes a first retrieval over the network for a service according to the set retrieval range for the request;

a retrieval result judgment unit that judges whether or not a result of the first retrieval satisfies judgment criteria set in advance; and

a retrieval result output unit that outputs the result which is judged to satisfy the judgment criteria;

wherein, when it is judged that the result of the retrieval does not satisfy the judgment criteria, the retrieval unit changes the retrieval conditions and performs a second retrieval over the ~~network~~-network; and

when it is judged that a number of one or more services included in the result of the retrieval does not reach a lower limit number set as the judgment criteria, the retrieval unit changes the retrieval conditions to be wider and performs the second retrieval with respect to a new retrieval range excluding a range for which the first retrieval was performed.

9-10. (Canceled)

11. (Previously Presented) The service retrieval apparatuses according to claim 8, wherein, when it is judged that a number of one or more services included in the result of the first retrieval exceeds an upper limit number set as the judgment criteria, the retrieval unit changes the retrieval conditions to be narrower to perform the second retrieval.

12. (Previously Presented) The service retrieval apparatuses according to claim 11,

wherein the retrieval unit performs the second retrieval with respect to a new retrieval range excluding a range for which the first retrieval is performed.

13. (Previously Presented) The service retrieval apparatuses according to claim 12,

wherein the retrieval unit narrows down a range for which the first retrieval is performed to perform the second retrieval.

14. (Previously Presented) The service retrieval apparatuses according to claim 8, further comprising a reply unit that rearranges the result of the retrieval based upon values with respect to attribute items included in the retrieval conditions, and then returns the result of the retrieval to said client.

15. (Currently Amended) A client apparatus which retrieves a service over a network provided by a server connected to the network in response to a service retrieval request and sends the service retrieval request to a service retrieval apparatus providing a retrieval service for returning a result of the retrieval, comprising:

retrieval result receiving means for receiving a retrieval result sent from said service retrieval apparatus in response to the service retrieval request;

selection means for selecting one or more attribute items, magnitudes of which can be compared, from attribute items included in retrieval conditions of the service; and

output means for rearranging a plurality of items of service information included in the retrieval result based upon values of the attribute items selected by said selection means included in each item of service information to output the service information-information, wherein

the rearranging is executed when the plurality of items of service information exceeds a number set in advance.

16. (Currently Amended) A service retrieval method which retrieves a service provided by a server connected to a network in response to a request from a client and returns a result of the retrieval, comprising:

setting a retrieval condition in response to a request of the client;

performing a first retrieval over the network for a service based upon the retrieval condition;

judging whether or not a result of the first retrieval satisfies judgment criteria set in advance;

returning the result of the retrieval which is judged to satisfy the judgment criteria to the client; and

when it is judged that the result of the retrieval does not satisfy the judgment criteria, changing the retrieval condition to perform a second retrieval over the ~~network~~network, and

when it is judged that a number of one or more services included in the result of the retrieval does not reach a lower limit number set as the judgment criteria, changing the retrieval condition to be wider to perform the second retrieval with respect to a new retrieval range excluding a range for which the first retrieval was performed.

17-18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously Presented) The service retrieval method according to claim 16 further comprising:

when it is judged that a number of one or more services included in the result of the first retrieval exceeds an upper limit number set as the judgment criteria, changing the retrieval condition to be narrower to perform the second retrieval.

20. (Previously Presented) The service retrieval method according to claim 19, wherein a range for which the first retrieval is performed is narrowed down to perform the second retrieval.

21. (Previously Presented) The service retrieval method according to claim 16, further comprising rearranging the result of the retrieval with respect to attribute items

included in the retrieval condition, and returning the rearranged result of the retrieval to the client.